SEVERAL

REASONS

RENDRED

By the People of God, (called Quakers)

Why no Outward *Force*, or *Impoſition*,

On the

CONSCIENCE

Ought to be uſed in Matters of

FAITH and RELIGION:

With ſeveral SAYINGS, Collected from the Speeches and Writings of KING *JAMES*, and KING *CHARLES* the First.

Acts 5. 38, 39.

Now I ſay unto you, Refrain from theſe men, and let them alone: for if this Counſel, or this Work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it; leſt haply ye be found Fighters againſt God.

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65(M)

Reaſons for Liberty.

LIBERTY of CONSCIENCE ought to be allowed in the dayes of the *Goſpel* in the free Exerciſe of it to Godward (without Compulſion) in all things relating to his Worſhip for theſe Reaſons following.

1. BEcauſe the General and Univerſal Royal Law of Chriſt Commands it, *Matth.* 7. 12. *All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo unto them: for this is the Law and Prophets.* That which every man would have and receive from another, he ought by Chriſt's Rule to give and allow it to another. But every man is willing to have the Liberty of his own Conſcience, therefore ought to allow it to another.

2. Becauſe, No man can perſwade the Conſcience of another, either what God is, or how he ſhould be worſhipped, but by the Spirit, which God hath given to inſtruct man in the Wayes of Truth.

3. Becauſe, all Obedience or Service that is obtained by Force, is for fear of Wrath, and not from Love, not for Conſcience ſake; and therefore will but continue ſo long as that fear or force abides upon them.

4. Becauſe, That by forcing, no man can make a Hypocrite to be a True Believer; but on the contrary, many may be made Hypocrites.

5. Becauſe, that in all forced Impoſitions upon mens Conſciences there is ſomething of the Wrath of man exerciſed, which works not the *Righteouſneſs of God*, but rather begets *Enmity* in the heart one towards another.

6. Becauſe, that by forcing any thing upon mens Conſciences, as to matters of Faith and Worſhip, many are hardened in their

hearts againſt the things impoſed; when as otherwiſe, through Love and gentle Inſtructions their hearts might be perſwaded to willing Obedience.

7. Becauſe, that Perſecution for Conſcience contradicteth Chriſt's Charge, *Matth.* 13. who bids, that *the Tares* (or *falſe Worſhippers*) be *ſuffered to grow together in the Field* (or World) *till the Harveſt* (or End of the World.)

8. Becauſe Force is contrary to the End for which it is pretended to be uſed (*viz.*) *the preſervation and ſafety of the Wheat*, which End is not anſwered by Perſecution, becauſe the Wheat is in danger to be plucked up thereby, as Chriſt ſaith.

9. Becauſe, to Force, is inconſiſtant with the Belief of the Jews Converſion (and other falſe Worſhippers) which is prayed for by the Publick Teachers, and cannot be attained, if Perſecution for Conſcience be proſecuted

10. Becauſe, they that impoſe upon mens Conſciences, exerciſe Dominion over mens Faith, which the Apoſtle denied, ſaying, *They had not Dominion over any mans Faith.*

11. Becauſe, Impoſition upon mens Conſciences neceſſitates them to ſin, in yeelding a Conformity contrary to their own faith: *For whatſoever is not of a mans own faith, is ſin.*

12. Becauſe, that Impoſition and Force wreſtles with Fleſh and Blood, and Carnal weapons, which is contrary to the Apoſtles Doctrine, who ſaid, *Our Weapons are not Carnal, but Spiritual, and mighty through God:* and *we wreſtle not with Fleſh and Blood.*

13. Becauſe, there is but *one Judg, Law-giver* and *King* in and over the Conſcience, as the Saints have teſtified in the Scriptures of Truth: and whoſoever would intrude, ſo as to be Judge and Law-giver over the Conſcience, intrencheth upon the Prerogative of Chriſt Iſa. 33. 22. *Jam.* 4. 12.

14. Becauſe, it is propheſied in *Iſa.* 11: *The Wolf ſhall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard ſhall lie down with the Kid, and there ſhall be no Deſtroyer in all the Holy Mountain*; and therefore no Impoſition upon mens Conſciences.

15. Becauſe to Impoſe upon mens Conſciences for Differences in Faith, is contrary to the Advice of the Apoſtle, who directs People to wait upon God to be ſatisfied, and not to the Magiſtrate

giſtrate or others, to be forced; who ſaith, *Whereunto we have attained, let us walk*; and *wherein any man is otherwiſe-minded, God ſhall reveal, even that unto him.*

16. Becauſe, to Force mens Conſciences, and to lay Yokes upon them, is to make void the Blood-ſhed and Sufferings of Chriſt, who ſits upon the Throne of the Conſcience, and gives Liberty there; and commands us to *ſtand faſt in that Liberty*, and *not to be entangled through the Impoſitions of men*, or *Yoke of Bondage*, Gal. 5. 6.

17. Becauſe, in all Nations the different Profeſſions and Perſwaſions of Religion, are either Friends or Enemies to the Governors: If Friends, then obliged by that Bond: If Enemies, then Chriſt's Command is to take place, who ſaith, *Love your Enemies*; which, if obſerved, Perſecution for Conſcience will be avoided.

18. Becauſe, Toleration of different Perſwaſions in Religion was allowed in the Jewiſh State, as not Inconſiſtent with their Safety, and that in things contrary each to other, as the *Sadduces*, *Phariſees*, *Eſſeans*, *Herodians*, with others.

19. Becauſe, the True Religion cannot be Preached up by Force of Arms, and the Primitive Chriſtians deteſted that Form of Proceedings.

20. Becauſe, no man hath ſuch Power over the Souls and Conſciences of other men, as to lay a Neceſſity on them to Believe that which they do not Believe, or not to Believe what they do Believe; True Faith being the Gift of God.

21. Becauſe, if the Magiſtrate Impoſeth upon the Conſcience, he muſt either do it as a Magiſtrate, or as a Chriſtian: Not as a Magiſtrate, for then Heathens (being Magiſtrates) have the ſame Power to Impoſe, and ſo by Revolutions and Conqueſts, may come to give Laws to Chriſtians, and Compel them to Idolatry. 2. Not as Chriſtians, for that Contradicts Chriſt's ſaying, *The Kings of the Gentiles exerciſe Lordſhip over them; but it ſhall not be ſo among you, for all ye are Brethren.*

22. Becauſe, by the ſame Rule and Reaſon that the Magiſtrate of one Nation ought to Impoſe upon, and Perſecute for Conſcience, the Magiſtrates in all other Nations ought to do the ſame, and ſo the greateſt part of Mankind may come to be deſtroyed,

there-

there being more that Diſſent, than are at Unity in Matters of Faith and Religion.

23. Becauſe the Strength of Truth, and its Conqueſt over Falſity and Deceit, is beſt Diſcovered by letting both have their Liberty, from outward Compulſion; for no doubt had outward Force been leſs uſed, the prevalency of Truth had been more manifeſt, and that wiſe ſaying truly experienced in the World, Viz. *That which is of God will ſtand, and that which is not will come to nothing.*

24. Becauſe, the Diſciples of Chriſt are rebuked by him for deſiring the Deſtruction of thoſe that were contrary to him, and would not receive him: which Zeal is ſharply reproved in his ſaying, *They knew not what Spirit they were of.*

25. Becauſe, to Impoſe upon mens Conſciences, and to Deſtroy their Perſons for Difference in Religion, is contrary to the End of Chriſts Coming, who ſaith, *He came not to Deſtroy mens Lives, but to Save them.*

26. Becauſe, People of divers Religions in one Nation, if not Tolerated, muſt ſome of them be Deſtroyed, or removed by Baniſhment. If Deſtroyed, the *Conſtancy* and *Patience* of the Sufferers for their Faith, moving *Pitty* and *Commiſeration*, makes men more ready to own, then to reject their Faith, and ſo rather Multiplies, then leſſens, the Number of its Profeſſors. If Baniſh'd, this renders the Baniſhed as ſo many Enemies abroad, ready upon all Occaſions to Diſturb the Peace and Tranquility of their own Native Country. There is therefore, in order to the outward Welfare of all Nations, a kind of Neceſſity for a *Toleration* in them of all *Religions.*

27. Becauſe, to Impoſe upon mens Conſciences begets a Hatred againſt the Impoſers in thoſe who are Impoſed upon, and Forc'd thereby to Violate their Conſciences towards God in matters of Worſhip.

28. Becauſe, men are Commanded to be Subject to the Powers that are, for Conſcience ſake, and therefore ſuch Powers ought not to perſecute men for Conſcience ſake, being that is preſcribed for the Rule of Obedience; the Scripture ſaying, *Be ye ſubject not only for Wrath, but for Conſcience ſake.*

29. We find it Aſſerted by King *James* in his Speech to the Parliament

Parliament in the Year 1609. who ſaid, *That it is a pure rule in Divinity, That God never loves to Plant his Church with* Violence *and* Blood; and furthermore ſaid, *It was uſually the condition of Chriſtians to be* Perſecuted, *but not to* Perſecute.

30. And we find the ſame things, in ſubſtance, aſſerted again by his Son *Charles the firſt*, in his Book known by the Name of ΕΙΚΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΗ, Printed for *R. Royſton*, as followeth.

Pag. 67. In his Prayer to God, he ſaid, *Thou ſeeſt how much* Cruelty *amongſt Chriſtians is acted under the colour of Religion; as if we could not be Chriſtians, unleſs we Crucifie one another.*

Pag. 28. *Make them at length ſeriouſly to conſider, that nothing* Violent *and* Injurious *can be Religious.*

Pag. 70. *Nor is it ſo proper to hew out Religious Reformations by the* Sword, *as to poliſh them by* fair *and* equal Diſputations, *among thoſe that are moſt concerned in the Differences, whom, not Force, but Reaſon ought to convince.*

Sure in matters of Religion, thoſe Truth gain moſt upon mens Judgments and Conſciences, which are leaſt urged with Secular Violence, *which weakens Truth with Prejudices.*

Pag. 115. *It being an Office not only of Humanity, rather to uſe* Reaſon *than* Force, *but alſo of Chriſtianity to ſeek* Peace *and* enſue *it.*

Pag. 91, 92. *In point of true Conſcientious* Tenderneſs, *I have often Declared, how little I deſire my Laws and Sceptar, ſhould intrench* on God's Soveraignty, *which is the* only King of mens Conſciences.

Pag. 123. *Nor do I deſire that any man ſhould be farther ſubject unto me, then all of us may be ſubject unto God.*

Concerning Oathes.

Pag. 76. *The Injoyning of Oathes, upon People, muſt needs in things doubtfull* be Dangerous, as in things unlawfull Damnable.

Some words of Advice from *CHARLES* the Firſt, to the then Prince of *Wales*, now King of *England*, &c.

Pag. 165. *My Counſel and Charge to you is, That you ſeriouſly conſider*

consider the former Real or Objected Miscariages, which might occasion my Troubles, that you may avoid them, &c.

Beware of Exasperating *any Factions, by the* Crosness *and* Asperity *of some mens* Passions, Humors, *and* private Opinions, *Employed by you, grounded only upon difference, in lesser matters, which are but the Skirts and Suburbs of Religion, wherein a Charitable* Connivance, *and Christian* Toleration, *often Dissipates their strength, when rougher Opposition Fortifies, and puts the despised and oppressed party into such Combinations, as may most enable them to get a full Revenge on those they count their Persecutors.*

Pag. 166. *Take heed that outward Circumstances and Formalities of Religion Devour not all.*

Pag. 164. *Your Prerogative is best shewed and exercised in* Remitting, *rather than* Exacting *the Rigor of the Laws, there being nothing worse than* Legal Tyranny.

Acts 5. 33, 34, 35, &c. Gamaliel *said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed unto your selves, what ye intend to do as touching these men, &c.*

Acts 18. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Gallio *said, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, Reason would that I should bear with you: But if it be a question of words and names, and of your Laws, look ye to it: for I will be no Judge of such matters.*

The End.